

232    *THE CASTAWAYS OF  
THE FLAG*

hangar which sheltered the two guns\*  
They did  
not let a murmur escape them.

For one moment M. Zermatt thought  
of carrying  
them over to the Falconhurst shore in  
the boat.  
But what would become of the  
unfortunate women  
if,, after the islet had been invaded,,  
their com-  
panions were unable to join them ?  
Besides, they  
would never have consented to go,

It was a little after four o'clock when a  
confused  
noise announced the presence of the  
savages, a  
couple of hundred yards away\*  
Captain Gould,  
3VL Zermatt, Mr, Wolston, Ernest,  
Frank, James,  
and the boatswain,, armed with  
carbines, were  
ready to fire, while Fritz and Jack  
stood with  
matches lighted near the two little  
cannon, only  
waiting for the moment to rake the  
slopes of the  
knoll with grape-shot.

When the black shadows showed against  
the early  
light of dawn, Captain Gould gave the  
order in a  
low tone to fire in. that direction-  
Seven or eight reports rang out,  
followed by  
horrible cries which proved that more  
than one  
bullet had found its billet in the  
crowd.

Three attacks had to be repelled before  
sunrise,  
la the last a score or so of natives

succeede<sup>d</sup> i&  
reaching the crest of the knoll.  
Although some of  
them had been mortally hit, the  
carbines could no<sup>t</sup>  
longer keep them in check, and but for  
a double  
charge of the ordnance the  
battery  
have been carried in this assault.